Australian National University

PUBLIC LECTURE

Faithful fairy-wrens: causes and consequences of fidelity

Thursday 19 June 1 – 2pm

Speaker

Anne Peters
Monash University

Location

Gould Seminar Room
(Rm 235) Gould Building (Bldg. 116),
Linnaeus Way, ANU

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This lecture is free and open to the public

RSB event information:
biology.anu.edu.au/News/Events.php

Fairy-wrens (genus *Malurus*) are cooperatively breeding, socially monogamous birds, notorious for extremely high levels of extra-pair paternity. Purple-crowned fairy-wrens, *M. coronatus,* at first sight appear similar to other fairy-wrens. However, our research showed that they are mostly faithful, possibly related to ecological constraints arising from habitat specialisation. Our research highlights that this low level of extra-pair paternity is associated with significant differences beyond immediate adaptations for extra-pair mating, ranging from acoustic communication patterns, to benefits of cooperative breeding to sexual signals. Although males do not pursue extra-pair females, when females are mated to a close relative, they do achieve high extra-pair paternity. Our current research is aimed at understanding the factors that determine reproductive success, (re-)mating decisions and heritable (genetic) and environmental effects on behaviour, morphology and self-maintenance.

About the speaker

Anne did her MSc in Nijmegen, the Netherlands, and her PhD at Botany and Zoology, ANU, on testosterone and life-history trade-offs in superb fairy wrens. After a year lecturing at ANU, she then spent 9 years at the Max Planck Institute for Ornithology, Germany. Since 2011 she has been at Monash University where she took up a Future Fellowship in 2012.
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